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Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6789th meeting
Wednesday, 20 June 2012, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Li Baodong	(China)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	Colombia	Mr. Alzate
	France	Mr. Araud
	Germany	Mr. Berger
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	India	Mr. Vinay Kumar
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Haroon
	Portugal	Mr. Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zhukov
	South Africa	Mr. Laher
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Tatham
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

United Nations peacekeeping operations

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

United Nations peacekeeping operations

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; Lieutenant General Chander Prakash, Force Commander of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Major General Paolo Serra, Force Commander and Head of Mission of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon; Major General Moses Bisong Obi, Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan; and Major General Fernando Rodrigues Goulart, Force Commander of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, to participate in this meeting.

I would also like to welcome the other Force Commanders and Chief Military Observers present in the Council Chamber today.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous (*spoke in French*): I should like to thank you, Sir, for giving Council members this opportunity to engage in an interactive dialogue with all our Force Commanders. They have been meeting throughout this week, as in previous years — indeed, they have met 10 times this year — for the annual conference of leaders of the military components of our 17 peacekeeping operations. Their week of discussion, I believe, has been very useful. This is the third time they have come to address the Security Council and engage in this exchange.

I note that this year we have also invited Lieutenant General Gutti, Commander of the African Union Mission in Somalia. We have done so because we enjoy very close cooperation with that African Union force.

I have nothing further to add. I believe that it would be useful — with your agreement, Sir — for them to introduce themselves one by one so that we can all identify them. Four of them will be giving us brief presentations on issues that I believe will be of interest to the Council. Of course, when it comes to the interactive dialogue, they will all be at the disposal of the Council's members in order to answer any questions. Of course, Lieutenant General Babacar Gaye, Chief Military Adviser, needs no introduction and is known to all.

I wish only to add that these are all exceptional officers who are carrying out extremely sensitive missions and enjoy my full confidence. I am proud to work alongside them every day.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Ladsous for his statement and for his suggestion that the Force Commanders should introduce themselves.

At the invitation of the President, the Force Commanders of the United Nations peacekeeping operations introduced themselves to the members of the Council.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank all the Force Commanders and Chief Military Observers for introducing themselves. On behalf of the Council, I welcome them to our meeting.

I give the floor to Lieutenant General Prakash.

Lieutenant General Prakash: At the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, Sir, for the support that you provide to the men and women in uniform who proudly serve under the United Nations flag in the Democratic Republic of Congo. I also thank you for giving me an opportunity to talk to the Council about the need for a system to assess and support common military standards in peacekeeping operations and avoid underperformance of units.

I will cover this subject in three parts: what this issue is about, what needs to be addressed and what is already being done in this regard, and what more can be done.

Turning to the first part concerning why this is an issue that needs to be addressed, Council members are well aware that a force component in a Chapter VII mission is made up of troops from different regions of the world with different military orientations. They hold varied types of equipment and the troops back home are trained to adhere to their national doctrines and objectives. This is further complicated by issues of culture and language, and sometimes by the perceptions of their performance as per national expectations.

Some may observe from what I have just said that there is nothing new here and that the United Nations forces have managed to get by not withstanding these challenges. But it also needs to be highlighted here that, over time, the peacekeeping environment has become increasingly complex and challenging and come under increasing scrutiny. Thus, the ability to absorb the differences and shortcomings that I have just outlined is getting weaker and weaker. When one thinks of missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Darfur, it is very evident that the business of military peacekeeping is now a specific and demanding affair in its own right, especially when it comes to the highest priority mandated task of protection of civilians.

I now turn to the issue of what is being done in this regard. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the troop-contributing countries (TCCs) already have a process of predeployment procedures, memorandums of understanding and laid-down training standards and concept of operations. This is supplemented by training material, standard operating procedures and manuals issued by the Office of Military Affairs, missions and even the troop-contributing countries.

In spite of the fact that all this is happening, we still face some situations and challenges in the field missions that highlight the fact that more needs to be done. For instance, the protection of civilians requires the force component to be very agile and flexible, and to operate in difficult terrain and risky and demanding situations. Not all contingents find themselves optimized to be able to effectively perform in that kind of scenario for reasons of training, equipment and sometimes even mental psyche. Some peacekeepers still arrive with a mindset and orientation of peacekeeping as a soft operational tour.

In the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), we continue to find that contemporary peacekeeping, when it comes to the protection of civilians under imminent threat, is a fine balance between prompt and robust action required from a soldier in uniform and a person who cares and nurtures the vulnerable civilian community in his area of operational responsibility. The traditional training of an officer and a soldier fielded to the missions does not equip them with all of the range of skills, techniques and sometimes even the mental attitude to operate in this wide band.

At this point, I am reminded of a statement in a recent publication of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, which states that "United Nations peacekeeping is ostensibly a political endeavour". Therefore, having a system that conditions our young men and women peacekeepers to operate in such a challenging environment is a reality of the business of modern-day peacekeeping. As to what more can be done, I would like to make a few suggestions.

First of all, the initiative of the Office of Military Affairs to base all contributions from TCCs on a generic infantry battalion is a welcome initiative in the right direction. To give members a practical example of standardization, in MONUSCO we have contingents holding varied types of armoured personnel carrier, in varied numbers. We have been pushing hard for the standardization of holdings based on operational needs. That has resulted in optimized use of holding of critical equipment and has generated much-needed financial savings, without jeopardizing operational efficiency.

Going further, we need to have a system that covers the whole lifespan of activities — from preparation to deployment to de-induction — and that addresses the issues related to operational performance and the image projection of the United Nations in the field. While some of that already exists, as I previously explained, nevertheless there are some gaps that need to be plugged in order to have a fully effective system in place. In my opinion, the preparation and predeployment phase is most critical. We need to place greater emphasis on issues that make United Nations peacekeeping under Chapter VII peacekeeping different from war fighting. Also, greater attention needs to be paid to preparing units under orders for deployment to a mission area on the mission-specific tasks. If the TCCs so desire, missions can provide teams to those units to brief and focus potential peacekeepers on their forthcoming tasks and duties.

In addition to the forum that already exists, there would be an advantage in facilitating greater interaction and communication between policy/decision-makers in national capitals and missions that are beneficiaries of troops provided by the capitals, so that both the contributor and the receiver are on the same page when it comes to understanding the requirements, constraints, limitations and performance of units.

Moreover, for contingents deployed in the mission area, there is a need for a regular formal feedback

system to be introduced tokeep the troop-contributing countries informed, of course through the permanent missions, about the operational performance of their troops. In MONUSCO, the chain of command in the Mission is conducting operational readiness inspections, the findings of which could well be formally shared with TCCs. I may highlight here that that feedback will comment on the multidisciplinary facets of peacekeeping, even to include issues related to community liaison and dealing with civil populations and humanitarian actors under challenging circumstances.

While I have made some suggestions for the collective improvement of the performance of units, I think there is also a need to have the very best leaders for the future missions, ideally with comprehensive and good grounding in United Nations peacekeeping missions. To support that, there needs to be a rigorous and honest personnel reporting system to inform national and United Nations authorities to facilitate the selection system, the aim being to have the right person for the right job. Also on this requirement, troop-contributing countries could be encouraged to incorporate a specific United Nations peacekeeping module into the junior and senior staff college courses syllabuses. That would help military officers to pick the various nuances and intricacies of peacekeeping, such as the political and humanitarian aspects, which is currently a shortcoming noticed in military peacekeepers.

In conclusion, while I have provided some suggestions for the adoption of a system to improve the performance of military components in United Nations peacekeeping, I request that this not be interpreted as the current system falling short of expectations. As a force commander, I am proud of what troops in MONUSCO are delivering today in a most challenging environment. That said, it is the mark of any professional set-up that we constantly endeavour to improve. It is in that context that I have provided members with some ideas and suggestions.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Lieutenant General Prakash for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Major General Serra.

Major General Serra: It is an honour for me, as Head of Mission and Force Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), to be given this opportunity to address the Security Council today on the challenges of leading a composite force towards common operational goals.

I shall elaborate on the subject of my presentation by first outlining aspects of the complexity of UNIFIL. I shall then turn to some of the key challenges inherent in a composite force, how those may impact the implementation of UNIFIL's mandate, and possible ways to address them. Let me first underline the complexity of the Mission.

As of June, the total military strength of UNIFIL stood at approximately 12,000 soldiers, from 39 troop-contributing countries. UNIFIL also has an important, albeit small, civilian component, consisting of about 1,000 civilian staff, including approximately 660 national civilian staff members. In addition, I can also count on capabilities provided by the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization Observer Group Lebanon, which is composed of 48 military observers. Both military and civilian components work closely together in implementing the Mission's mandate under resolution 1701 (2006). It is also important to mention that, in addition to ensuring close collaboration among the different components, the Force works in close cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces, carrying out an average of 10 to 12 per cent of operational activities jointly every day.

The UNIFIL area of operations can be considered very small — 64 kilometres in width and 40 kilometres in depth, totalling 1,026 square kilometers — and bordered by the 120-kilometre-long Blue Line to the south and south-east. The Litani River, in the north, and a 34-kilometre-long coastline along the Mediterranean Sea, in the west, define the shape of the area of operations. With the exception of the Plain of Tyre, the terrain is undulating, with a series of steep hills and deep valleys, making it an area very difficult to control. The area of maritime operations extends 110 nautical miles from north to south along the Lebanese coastline, and approximately 45 nautical miles east to- est, for a total size of 5,000 square miles.

As members are aware, in an effort to ensure that the Mission is configured more appropriately to fulfil its mandated tasks, UNIFIL is in the process of implementing the recommendations of the strategic review that was conducted by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations pursuant to resolution 2004 (2011).

In implementing the military capability study conducted from 27 November to 7 December 2011, UNIFIL is reviewing the possibility of troop adjustments, in coordination with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, with a view to having leaner but no less capable forces, while ensuring that the Force's ability to discharge its mandated tasks is preserved and consistent with the priorities identified by the strategic review.

UNIFIL also continues to work closely with the Lebanese Armed Forces through the strategic dialogue, with a view to increasing the capacity of the Lebanese Armed Forces to assume effective and sustainable security control of the UNIFIL area of operations and Lebanese territorial waters.

The focus remains on leveraging all those initiatives towards achieving a move to a permanent ceasefire.

I shall now turn to the specific challenges of leading a composite force towards common operational goals.

First, I would like to reflect on the multinational nature of UNIFIL and some of the key lessons learned in that regard. Surely, there are challenges in leading and coordinating troops from 39 different countries from the continents of Africa, Asia, Europe, Central America and South America. Above all, however, multinationality is an added value. It is a testimony to the concerted efforts of nations to promote stability in southern Lebanon. In order to ensure interoperability and sound cooperation among military personnel, it is important to ensure that members of the Force are able to communicate among themselves — in our case in English. Also, the diverse backgrounds and varying approaches that troops bring from their past national, regional or non-United Nations multinational operational experiences tend to bear on the way they tackle operational challenges. That reality has highlighted the need for a comprehensive doctrinal body, comprising manuals, policies and standard operating procedures. The United Nations generic infantry battalion manual, recently developed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations — a battalion being an infantry unit with manpower of about 750 troops — provides an essential tool for troop contributors, both during predeployment preparations and in operational employment.

Secondly, in building multinational forces, a capability-driven approach to generating resources is essential. Our focus in UNIFIL will be on quality-oriented strategies, instead of quantity. Interoperability of material and equipment is required to maximize operational efficiency. Clear operational standards would also help new contributor counties to develop national capacities in order to serve in UNIFIL or similar United Nations peacekeeping operations.

As was highlighted in the recently conducted strategic review, a third challenge lies in the integration of the civilian and military components, both within the Mission and in securing better integration of efforts among UNIFIL, the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon and the United Nations country team. In order to strengthen and institutionalize the relationship between the political and military leadership of UNIFIL, a civilian has been appointed as Deputy Head of Mission and a comprehensive and integrated Mission planning mechanism is being instituted. For that purpose, an integrated Mission planning team led by the newly appointed Deputy Head of Mission has been established.

Fourthly, it is essential to accommodate multinationality in the composition of land forces. Currently, UNIFIL land forces consist of nine manoeuvre battalions, seven of which belong to a single troop-contributing country and two of which can be considered multinational, namely, the Irish-Finnish battalion and the Spanish battalion with a small unit from El Salvador. Based on experience gained on the ground, I can say that the ideal solution would be to have homogeneous battalions. But a multinational battalion with different nationality sub-units, at the company level of around 150 troops, would also be manageable and very effective. Multinationality below that level is recommended only for specific tasks, such as in the case of the Slovenian "human terrain" detachment, consisting of 11 troops, together with the Italian brigades, or the Timor-Leste team, also composed of 11 troops, dealing with logistic support within the Portuguese engineer company.

A final challenge relates to the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force, which currently comprises nine ships from six different countries, supported by two helicopters. The rotation periods of ships differ by country, ranging from one month to two years. To improve efficiency and institutional knowledge, it will be useful to standardize the rotation cycle of maritime units to a minimum level of from four to six months.

As concerns interoperability, the effectiveness of the maritime component depends on clearly identified

capabilities, equipment and training. Due to the fact that troop contributors have different types of equipment and procedures in communications, the Maritime Task Force has no common means for data exchange and uses commercial satellites as a primary means to meet minimum military requirements.

In conclusion, multinationality can be a factor of strength for United Nations peace operations and will work as a force multiplier if certain conditions are met. The key words are unity of command and synergy of efforts.

At this point, please allow me to convey to members how greatly the Mission has benefited from the unwavering support it has received over the years from the Council. Nearly six years since the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006), we are witnessing the calmest period in southern Lebanon in many years. That is largely due to UNIFIL's deterrent presence and close collaboration with the Lebanese Armed Forces, the Government and the people of South Lebanon.

The Lebanese Armed Forces have proved to be a reliable institution, able to bring together all of Lebanon's confessional groups. Cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces remains at the core of UNIFIL's mandate, with a view to improving their capabilities to eventually take over the tasks mandated in resolution 1701 (2006). However, notwithstanding the success of military operations, ultimate success is contingent upon effectively addressing the roots of the conflict through a political process. It will therefore be vital to take advantage of the window of opportunity that UNIFIL's presence has created, to make progress towards the establishment of a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution.

Very soon, the Council will discuss the extension of UNIFIL's mandate. As Head of Mission and Force Commander of UNIFIL, I count on the continued support of the Security Council in maintaining the Force's ability to discharge its mandated tasks, consistent with the priorities identified by the strategic review. Being optimistic about the future is inspiring; the rest is knowledge, resources, goodwill and hard work.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Major General Serra for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Major General Obi.

General Obi: I have been asked to speak as Force Commander on the challenges of dealing with a complex political environment in peacekeeping operations. I will draw from my experience as Force Commander of the defunct United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) and of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), with particular reference to the inter-communal crisis that took place in Jonglei state, South Sudan, at the turn of the year, in December 2011 and January 2012.

Briefly, by way of background, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which was signed in Naivasha in 2005, left several issues unresolved by the time South Sudan seceded on 9 July 2011. Among the unresolved issues are border demarcation and the sharing of oil revenues, both of which have become pivotal issues in the most recent crisis between the Sudan and South Sudan, with accompanying challenges to the implementation of the UNMISS mandate.

As to the challenges, in the case of the previous Mission, UNMIS, the Abyei issue posed a range of challenges. Of particular note is the challenge of protecting civilians when parties to the Agreement were in conflict, as was the case in May 2011. The issue of the commitment, or lack of it, of the parties was well highlighted in that case. As Force Commander, one had to remain actively engaged with the militaries on both sides and also work closely with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General at the political level. Doing that ensured that air routes were kept open, reinforcements made possible, certain evacuations carried out and humanitarian operations conducted.

The South Kordofan crisis, at the point of liquidating UNMIS, posed a complex range of challenges. One of those was having United Nations troops in enclaves, for example Kauda in the Nuba Mountains and Julud, which effectively became out of control of the parties to the CPA. The challenges at that point were complex — having to deal with the liquidation of the mission, mandate implementation and even protecting and sustaining the troops themselves, in a thoroughly complex environment. Again, active engagement with all parties concerned was crucial under such circumstances.

In the current Mission, UNMISS, some of the challenges naturally stem from the mandate of the Mission, which on the face of it looks fairly straightforward but, as is so often the case, the devil is in

the details. A key word in the mandate is "support". Of course, we support peace consolidation, the protection of civilians and conflict mitigation. This means that we must provide support to the Government of the Republic of South Sudan as it fulfils its responsibility to protect civilians. But what is also key is the task of UNMISS to protect civilians in imminent danger when the Government of the Republic of South Sudan is not doing so.

Out of this arise the military tasks and, again, support and assistance to the Government of the Republic of South Sudan in creating and sustaining a safe and secure environment. Of course, that in itself causes challenges, since the Government of the Republic of South Sudan has occasionally had priorities other than ours, not the least of which is engaging in conflict on the border with the Sudan. There is a real risk in UNMISS not being seen as committing efforts and resources towards the protection of civilians, and instead giving the impression of simply backfilling the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) while it fights on the border.

Equally, there is a perception among the people of South Sudan that UNMISS is failing in its mission to protect civilians, since it appears to be doing nothing to prevent the Sudanese Armed Forces from bombing civilians near the border; thus, a question arises regarding the need for a Chapter VII mandate.

Of course, we can do nothing but report what we see to New York for the Security Council to take action, as getting into direct conflict with a Member State would fall outside our mandate. The mandate is not well understood by the people of South Sudan and much effort has to been expended, including in organizing seminars and various other outreach programmes, to explain just what our mandate is. The absence of a border monitoring mechanism has not helped issues in that case. Also, the mandate recognizes national ownership and primary responsibility, yet the Mission must be prepared to protect when the host nation is not doing so. That, to me, is a leading rule.

Of course, when humanitarian organizations are working in the border areas to sustain those who are fleeing fighting, it behooves us to ensure that they can operate in a safe and secure environment. But understandably, some humanitarian organizations are uncomfortable with that arrangement because of its inherent conflict with their humanitarian principles. So it often happens that one cannot win. I must say, however, that we have been actively involved in the protection of civilians, even in those areas, in conjunction with humanitarian agencies — the Yida and Pariang areas are two of the many examples.

Finally, I should like to present to the Council the dilemma of what we should do if it is the SPLA itself that is threatening civilians. My rules of engagement would allow the soldiers under my command to use force — and indeed lethal force — if required, but to do so could in some cases, I sense, be a game changer in terms of our relationship with the SPLA and the host nation and the amount of consent that we currently enjoy. My fellow Force Commanders may have their views on that, and I would be pleased to share them. Those are some of challenges of dealing with a complex political environment.

As to the Jonglei crisis, let us turn to the events of late December 2011 and January this year. Many will be familiar with how cattle and access to grazing areas and water are pivotal to the lives of the people in that region of Africa and how cattle rustling, among other acts, often results in violent clashes and many deaths. Thus it was in 2011 when, following attacks and revenge attacks, the Murle tribe attacked the Lou Nuer, and the Lou Nuer chose to exact their revenge in late December, and advanced with a strength of over 6,000, which is a conservative estimate, upon Likuangole, a Murle community.

The Mission's early warning early/response strategy paid off, leading to the spotting of the advancing column on 23 December 2011. Before that time, we conducted daily air and ground patrols that enabled us to spot the advancing column. That information was immediately shared with Government officials, security agencies and the humanitarian community, which enabled those in harm's way to move out while others were evacuated by the Mission.

UNMISS carried out necessary deployments and reinforcements, along with the SPLA and, later, the Southern Sudan Police Service. We had rightly identified Pibor as the centre of gravity, as it is the seat of Government and county headquarters, with a substantial civilian population. A decision was taken to prevent the advancing ravaging youth from causing harm to the civilians in the town. The decision was also shared with the Government of the Republic of South

Sudan and the SPLA, and together we took the measures necessary to protect civilians in the town.

The Mission's crisis management support team had been activated upon receipt of the report of an advancing column of armed Lou Nuer youth, in order to assess our options. It was quite clear to me that we had to be prepared to intervene to support the SPLA, provide it with physical and moral support, and encourage it to take responsibility in protecting civilians. I therefore directed that our troops in settlements — including Likuangole, Gumuruk and other front-line settlements — be reinforced.

Clearly, as a member of the senior leadership team in the Mission, I was required to act at the political level. By acknowledging that the ultimate solution to the problem could only be a South Sudanese solution, we agreed that Vice-President Riek Machar should be flown to the area to speak to the Lou Nuer. That decision, and holding my troops in Likuangole to facilitate his visit in the face of such a force, were very crucial decisions I had to take.

There then followed a lengthy process of negotiation and mediation, but the Lou Nuer youth, having attacked Likuangole, proceeded forward to Pibor, where most of the Murle from smaller settlements, including Likuangole, had moved. By those actions, we encouraged the SPLA to be also prepared to defend. I moved my armoured personnel carriers over a distance of 200 kilometres through muddy terrain to reinforce and embolden the SPLA. With our APCs in manoeuvre, the Lou Nuer were engaged in Pibor. Having taken some casualties, that became a turning point and the Lou Nuer had to withdraw.

Now, what are the lessons learned? Our early warning strategy had paid off. Our crisis management support team had activated in good time. Efforts were shared with Governments, which emphasized the importance of cooperation with the host nation. Together, we worked with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as a team and a force multiplier, including by using the media.

What, then, did not work well? Poor communications and the absence of military helicopters were very crucial. It became difficult to reinforce the troops because some of the civilian helicopters would not carry our ammunition, classifying them as dangerous cargo. Finally, given that the major events took place in late December 2011, a few months into the lifespan of the Mission, there was a shortage of required staff and the Mission had not fully generated its force. While the force had the available combat power, half of it had to be committed towards that operation.

Having said that, I would like to say that collectively, with the Government and the people of South Sudan, although there were casualties, we were able to prevent a situation in which we would have lost more people.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Major General Obi for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Major General Goulart.

Major General Goulart: It is a great honour for me to speak to the Security Council on behalf of the military component of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). My presentation today will focus on the military component's contribution to Haiti's stabilization and the support it provides to that country's institutions.

Since its creation in 2004, MINUSTAH has been working tirelessly towards establishing the rule of law, restoring public safety and order, protecting civilians, supporting the democratic process and preserving human rights. In the context of the Mission's broad mandate, the military component's contribution is primarily aimed at promoting security and stability, protecting civilians and responding to disasters. In addition to that, however, the military also makes a focused contribution to strengthening relevant Haitian institutions.

Acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter and in close coordination with the United Nations police and the Haitian National Police (HNP), MINUSTAH's military component has been making steady progress in all its mandated tasks. In this regard, daily operations are conducted in order to assist in the maintenance of the rule of law and public order. Each military unit manages its area of responsibility by conducting patrols and setting up checkpoints. Such activities have deterred violence and crimes and instilled a sense of security in the local population, thereby improving law and order. By maintaining a secure environment in Haiti, the military component has also helped to enable further political and socio-economic developments in the country.

We are very proud of the accomplishments that have helped Haiti to recover from the 2010 earthquake

and the efforts made to reduce criminal violence and improve protection of the civilian population. Regarding the cholera outbreak, the Mission's rapid response, supported by the military component, has been mitigating the effects and spread of the disease. That support includes preparing cholera treatment centres, allocating medical teams and distributing clean water to affected populations. I should also mention that the measures that the Mission and other agencies have been developing to fight cholera have had the additional effect of enhancing the Haitian response capacity in that area.

I should also highlight the various work projects done by the military engineers. Besides fulfilling the force's requirements, they are engaged in demolishing unsafe buildings, removing debris, preparing sites for relocating internally displaced persons, cleaning ditches and canals, repairing roads and drilling wells. The engineer units have been working effectively to support the Haitian Government through improvements in HNP installations, constructing new police stations, preparing the ground for schools and hospitals, and erecting prefabs to house the judiciary. Such efforts mitigate the effects of rains and storms, improve living conditions for poor communities, make the population more secure and further enhance the conditions needed for stability in the country.

Regarding institutional development, the security generated by the military presence is unquestionably its best contribution to strengthening the country's political and security sector institutions. Particularly relevant are the military component's contributions to the HNP and the Haitian Coast Guard, as well as its support for the electoral process. Military units conduct regular joint operations with United Nations police and the HNP in order to prevent crime and arrest criminals and gang members. Where there are demonstrations and civil unrest, the military component provides backup and support as needed. More important, our presence has been a confidence-builder for the HNP, which knows that it can count on our support as it goes through its own development process.

Such joint operations have recently featured support for the HNP in its actions against the former Haitian military or former members of the Forces armées d'Haiti, and other elements threatening to organize into a second armed force and questioning the Government's authority. I am pleased to report that MINUSTAH's military component, working closely with its police counterpart, successfully supported the HNP's operation against such elements last month. Operation Sunrise proved firmly that joint operations, when planned in advance and in close conjunction with the Government, bring the Mission improved results.

During the past year, the military component's interaction with the HNP has increased even more. Joint planning and coordination have improved our success in the field, but more importantly, by observing and participating in joint exercises, the HNP has been able to demonstrate increased planning capacity for security operations.

Along the same lines of support for Haitian institutions, our plan is to add a new task for MINUSTAH's maritime element, composed of Uruguayan patrol boats and crews. That unit will incorporate a capacity-building role for the Haitian Coast Guard, in partnership with MINUSTAH's police component. Taking advantage of the mentoring experience and French-speaking abilities of the United Nations officers, the Uruguayan crews will provide the Coast Guard with technical knowledge to improve its training and thereby increase its participation in patrolling Haiti's maritime borders.

Another of the military component's contributions is its participation in the electoral process. In the period leading up to elections, military units are involved in logistical support for polling stations and warehouses around the country, mainly by transporting ballot boxes and electoral material to them. On election days, the military component provides overall security in departments or regions that have a high-level threat assessment. This covers polling stations and areas where electoral material is being gathered or counted, as well as key Government buildings and sites, in case of election-related violence.

As some here may remember, the military component's role in preventing the violence that resulted in December 2010 after the announcement of the first round of presidential elections was extremely important to preventing the situation from spiraling out of control. Along the same lines, the military component is ready to provide support for the upcoming local and partial senatorial elections, though the date has yet to be confirmed. It should also be noted that, while MINUSTAH's resources and assets have enabled it to support elections effectively, the Government of Haiti will have to inherit many of these tasks and functions.

In the wake of the adoption of resolution 2012 (2011), MINUSTAH has completed a drawdown of its military, police and civilian capabilities. The military component's authorized strength is currently at 7,340 troops, of whom 7,285 are currently effective, after a reduction of 1,600 troops and related equipment. Along with the drawdown, the military component has reconfigured its force to maximize mission effectiveness. The remainder have been concentrated in higher-risk areas and, thanks to close coordination with the police component, the presence of formed police units in areas being vacated by the military has ensured the gradual transition of responsibilities to the HNP.

Looking towards the future, we are currently considering the military component's next configuration, taking into account resolution 2012 (2011), according to which future adjustments of the force configuration should be based on the overall security situation on the ground and the increasing development of Haitian State capacities.

All in all, we firmly believe that MINUSTAH has successfully been carrying out its tasks in providing security and stabilization in Haiti. However, some key challenges, which I would like to present to the Council before finishing my presentation, remain ahead of us.

Above all, the HNP must be further strengthened so that it can assume the entire responsibility for the country's security needs. The Government of Haiti and MINUSTAH have the same objective: the timely drawdown and ultimate departure of the Mission. However, that must happen without a security vacuum being created when the military component withdraws. In addition, the country's capacity to conduct elections with limited external support, to deal with the effects of seasonal rains and hurricanes by itself and to remain focused on the path of good governance, political stability and socio-economic development are of paramount importance.

I thank the Council for its attention, and I reaffirm the continuous strong commitment of the military component in giving all its strength and best effort to the accomplishment of the mandate that MINUSTAH received from the Council.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Major General Goulart for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to welcome all the Force Commanders who have joined us today and to commend the initiative of Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous. His input will certainly be useful and very beneficial.

Before moving to the substance of my statement, on behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco, I would like to pay a warm tribute to the Blue Helmets and to commend their devotion, commitment and spirit of sacrifice for the noble goals of the United Nations. I take the opportunity to reiterate our condolences to the families of those countries that have lost members of their armed forces or police or civilians in the service of the United Nations.

No one can dispute that the peacekeeping mission is the most tangible and visible activity of our Organization's work. It is increasingly complex and demanding in terms of human and financial resources. Its fundamentals remain the same.

First, peacekeeping certainly remains the most effective and least costly way to restore and to build peace.

Secondly, the multidimensional nature of recent peacekeeping operations requires us to find responses tailored to the changing needs of such operations, as well as to the new challenges and circumstances that arise once missions have been mandated.

Thirdly, peacekeeping requires different approaches in order to take into account the realities specific to each situation. In that respect, seeking harmonized practices, other than in logistics, cannot be through a one-size-fits-all approach or an end in itself.

Fourthly, in trying to find innovative responses to new challenges, it is essential to remain committed to the core principles of United Nations peacekeeping, namely, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, the consent of parties, impartiality in implementing Council mandates and the non-use of force except in the case of legitimate defence.

Fifthly and lastly, as others have underscored this morning, the protection of civilians remains the primary responsibility of nation States and, when mandated by the United Nations, requires adequate training and logistical resources for its implementation.

In reaction to the presentations that we heard this morning, allow me to highlight the following elements.

First, it is essential to adapt the financial and material resources available to peacekeeping operations to mandates adopted by the Council. In that context, notwithstanding the need for rationalization, budgetary and financial constraints should not hamper the effectiveness and efficiency of operations mandated by the Security Council.

As was amply and tangibly demonstrated this morning, peacekeeping operations usually take place in difficult conditions, sometimes with the involvement of actors who threaten the security and physical safety not only of civilians, but also of Blue Helmets. In that respect, in addition to early-warning systems, Blue Helmets must have the necessary means and equipment to defend themselves, and those who attack them must be fully brought to account.

In order to succeed, any peacekeeping mission must base its activity on the neutrality and impartiality that characterize the work of the United Nations, pursuant to the mandates established by the Council. That is the only way to ensure the trust and the cooperation of the parties to a dispute.

More than a decade ago, resolution 1353 (2001) set the stage for increased cooperation among the Council, the troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat. Despite some progress, the full potential of such triangular cooperation is far from being achieved. We must do more, and we are committed to doing so. In that context, the issue of training was rightly emphasized by several speakers this morning. We believe that training at the national level and through modules prepared by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should be complemented by the sharing of knowledge and good practices among troop-contributing countries.

In that regard, the issue of multilingualism is extremely important and must be reflected in the goal of ensuring greater effectiveness and cooperation between peacekeepers and not only the authorities, but also the people that they are mandated to serve and protect.

Finally, I would like to take advantage of the presence of the Force Commanders with us today to highlight the importance of inter-mission cooperation. Moreover, in the context of the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, which I have the honour to chair, we have decided to keep that topic as a priority in our debates and analysis. I would like to ask the Force Commanders who are here if they can share with us the best practices that they have acquired in the field so that we can be inspired by them and ultimately establish them as consistent practices to be applied in other missions.

On the basis of Morocco's commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes and the role of the United Nations as an arbiter in the peaceful settlement of disputes and in maintaining international peace and security, my country has consistently contributed to peacekeeping operations almost since its independence. We will spare no effort in continuing to contribute to strengthening the role of the Organization in maintaining peace and to the ongoing improved effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.

Mr. Cabral (Portugal): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate.

Peacekeeping and peacebuilding are at the core of United Nations activities, and those of the Security Council in particular. It is therefore not only useful but also, in our view, extremely important to take the opportunity to interact at regular intervals with the Force Commanders and directly hear their points of view and recommendations based on their unique experience. I therefore thank the Generals, our briefers today, for their very comprehensive and useful presentations. I also welcome all military commanders here today and thank them for their presence. I would also offer a word of thanks to Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous for his introduction and for facili[illegible]ng the organization of today's meeting.

Let me begin by commending the work of the United Nations peacekeeping operations and paying tribute to all women and men that compose the personnel of the various missions for the way they carry out their duties, often in very challenging and difficult conditions. They deserve our continuous admiration and support.

Let me also commend the work of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), not only in facing the challenges of the ever more complex and multidimensional activity of peacekeeping, but also because of the reform process currently under way and also, more recently, on the development of the United Nations generic infantry battalion manual.

I will be very brief, since we believe that we are here today essentially to listen. I will limit myself to some comments on two or three issues already raised by the briefers.

First, it is really a challenge for United Nations peacekeeping operations to fulfil so many diverse mandates and different tasks in the most varied conditions, diverse environments and different geographical areas, and with personnel coming from dissimilar backgrounds and using different languages. We therefore believe that a system is needed to put in place and ensure common operational military standards, of which the manual is a good example. A precondition for such a system is to guarantee adequate training before the deployment of a mission, a training that takes into consideration the specific conditions on the ground, but also essential values and objectives of the United Nations, including issues of human rights, women's participation, the protection of civilians, in particular, vulnerable groups, and respect for cultural diversity and environmental conditions.

On another, related issue, it is very important that a balanced number of caveats and clear rules of engagement be defined in order to allow a force commander to reach the common operational goals.

Another theme I would like to address is the issue of political consent by the parties on the ground, which is essential to ensure the sustainability of a peacekeeping mission and which implies a shared strategic understanding of its objectives, and the permanent, constructive and responsible cooperation between those parties and the United Nations mission. In that context, a specific mechanism could be implemented within each mission in order to monitor how the parties are implementing their given consent through meaningful cooperation and to report its issues through the Secretariat to the Security Council. That would allow the Council to react in a prompt and timely manner to sudden changes in the level of political support enjoyed by the mission concerned.

It is often said that peacekeepers are the first peacebuilders. That aspect merits our full attention, since the quality of the connection between the two sides of the same reality constitutes in most cases the key to sustained success of United Nations actions and interventions. That connection starts, obviously, at Headquarters through proper coordination among different branches of the Secretariat, but it is essential to ensure that it remains a permanent concern of the leadership of each mission. Indeed, the military component plays an important role in early peacebuilding efforts, namely, by keeping law and order, allowing people to go back to their normal lives, establishing a secure environment, strengthening the rule of law and promoting institution-building. Naturally, none of those efforts can work properly and effectively without the full involvement and commitment of the host country in a process of responsible national ownership.

Let me conclude by reiterating my country's tribute to all men and women who, often through personal sacrifice and risk, act on our behalf in order to achieve peace and security in the world.

Mr. Haroon (Pakistan): Today is a very appropriate time to address the situation of peacekeepers, as well as to meet with them and hear some of their opinions. We thank Mr. Ladsous and we thank and welcome all the Force Commanders for their insightful briefings, their clarity and incisiveness in presenting perspectives on the subjects under consideration, which brings the value of constant interaction between the Security Council and the field into appropriate focus.

Lest we forget, the briefers are officers and gentlemen, so while a lot has been said, so much has not been said. While their briefings have evoked many memories of actions taken in the service of humankind, it would not be right not to mention here the injuries and fatalities suffered by our valiant standard-bearers, the most recent examples being the losses suffered in the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

The incident in MONUSCO last month resulted in injuries to some of our peacekeepers, but that has clearly not dented our commitment to United Nations peacekeeping in any form whatsoever. Over the past 50 years, 130 Pakistanis have laid down their lives during peacekeeping activities, which is one of the highest numbers of fatalities suffered by any single State Member of the United Nations and which speaks of our continual commitment to defend — at whatever the cost to us — the sanctity of the blue uniform.

Against the backdrop of such sobering statistics, the imperativeness of enhancing the safety and security of peacekeepers cannot be overemphasized. The imperiled safety of troops can undermine the sanctity of peacekeeping operations. Insufficient resources and a lack of operational readiness can also jeopardize troop safety.

Lieutenant General Prakash spoke of standardization, performance and adequate resource provision. Those

aspects are important not only for us to consider but for the contributors to the security of all our missions to accomplish the mandates effectively. It can be suggested that, to an extent, underperformance and standardization should be addressed by developing training modules and assessment parameters within the context of a mission's challenges. We can undertake that important task by evaluating the troop-contributing countries (TCCs) with more structured predeployment visits that encompass a host of tests and scenario-based exercises with a view to checking the operational efficacy of all outfits. In fact, we recommend that approach. The module can be developed to assess the operational readiness and worthiness of our troops. We welcome the Department of Peacekeeping Operations' reinforced focus in that specific area.

Given the broad geographical base of TCCs, achieving standardization in equipment, mechanical transport and training may not be easy. However, it is important and essential to determine baseline standards to avoid underperformance. Quality and performance should not be compromised out of the desire to widen the base of TCCs or in the name of regional representation or other geopolitical considerations. We must continue to place the highest premium on professional excellence.

In all United Nations peacekeeping missions, leading a composite force towards common operational goals is a pressing challenge that is exacerbated by numerous factors. First, peacekeeping operations are not conventional warfare, with a well-defined adversary. Often there is no defined adversary. Secondly, the presence of multinational contingents entails numerous diversities, for example in terms of training, weapons, equipment, the articulation of command and control imperatives, and communication. Finally, a wide range of strains, including alien terrain, weather and the prevailing political and security situation, also contribute significantly.

The challenges of common operational goals are exacerbated by complex mandates, where support for host nations has to be provided in difficult political environments. Such assistance includes support for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, security structure reforms in the host State, improvements in the judicial and correctional systems, the protection of civilians, humanitarian support and infrastructure development. That is indeed a wide range of issues that need to be addressed.

I think that the United Nations peacekeeping Missions in Liberia and East Timor are stellar examples in that regard, and — this is very important — those tasks need the active cooperation not only of the United Nations as a whole but also of the Security Council in particular, as well as the ownership of host States.

Today's meeting has highlighted the challenges and complexity of peacekeeping operations. We in the Security Council must ensure that complexities are simplified and operational strains eased out. We can do so by laying down clear and achievable mandates that are not fraught with individual national priorities or complicated by unwieldy political propositions.

Reinforcing triangular cooperation among the Security Council, the Secretariat and TCCs is therefore essential. The Security Council must drive such cooperation. A one-off briefing close to mandate renewal does not suffice.

Sustained dialogue is also essential in the wake of drawdown and reconfiguration. These must be thought out in much more complex situations, such as in Africa. Technical assessments carried out to implement drawdown and deployment must be based on realities on the ground and shared on a timely basis with TCCs. Consultations with the TCCs concerned therefore become vital, not just on the ground but also here in New York.

The operational success of peacekeeping is predicated on the timely and assured deployment of human and material resources. Questions of resources — and this is an important point — cannot be hedged on the pretext of financial constraints; I will say a little more on this issue later on. Under-resourced Missions are neither effective nor safe. The Security Council and the Secretariat must therefore ensure the provision of resources to peacekeeping missions, in consultation with all stakeholders.

Finally, let me say that underlining and strengthening coordination between peacekeeping and peacemaking also remains essential for success. Successful military operations can neither replace nor obviate political dialogue and reconciliation. If we cannot win peace, we will not be able to enforce it.

Lastly, I wish to raise the issue of the ever-pressing need for money. The strapped Western Powers, which foot most of the annual $6 billion bill to keep the peace in Africa alone, are today in difficult situations when

it comes to paying more, and we should understand that. But at times like this, I return to the sage advice of The Economist, the most effective media organ in the United Kingdom — I think my friend Mark Lyall Grant will agree — which I believe is one of the most no-nonsense, common-sense publications in the world. The Economist states, in this month's edition — rather appropriately and aptly — that peacekeepers are doing a useful job in Africa and deserve to be properly paid. The United Nations Africa missions have helped to create the continent's own peacekeepers, and as useful as such missions are, Africa will need external help from the United Nations peacekeepers for decades.

Money is grudgingly spent. Helicopters and other effective equipment are often essential. The current world situation, with inflation rampant everywhere, has not left a safety margin for the countries, especially those in Asia, providing those troops, so very often these helicopters are withdrawn, as was the case with MONUSCO recently, with devastating consequences. The Economist says, rather arrestingly, that sticking to such a low fixed price is self-defeating in the United Nations. The advice they give us in the end, which I think all present could definitely benefit from, is that without peacekeepers

> "conflicts will begin again — and the ensuing costs would be enormously higher, not just in terms of military action ... but in relief efforts, forgone trade and ruined futures. Without peace, nothing happens in Africa. It is worth a few more dollars a day." (*The Economist, 9 June 2012*)

Ms. Rice (United States of America): First, let me thank all of the Force Commanders, as well as the men and women under their command, for their service and dedication. They have our strong support for the work that they and all peacekeepers are doing for the cause of international peace and security. The tragic deaths only 12 days ago of seven Nigerian peacekeepers in the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire remind us yet again of the dangerous and difficult circumstances in which United Nations peacekeepers operate. We mourn their loss, express our condolences to their families and remain mindful of the great risks facing their colleagues worldwide who continue to carry out missions of critical importance.

I am pleased that we have now standardized the practice of inviting the United Nations Force Commanders to address the Security Council while they are here for their annual conference. Our interaction with them injects practical expertise and insight from the field into the Council's discussions. I am also glad that they will be meeting with the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations this week.

There have been significant developments in United Nations peacekeeping since we met last year. The Security Council has ended the original United Nations Mission in the Sudan and established new missions in Abyei, South Sudan and Syria. The Council has also made important changes in ongoing missions to better enable peacekeepers on the ground to fulfil their mandates. Working with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, we have taken steps to promote inter-mission cooperation, particularly between the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, where it has proved critical to supporting democratic outcomes. We decreased force levels in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti to almost pre-earthquake levels, as security has improved in that country. We authorized increased troop levels and enhanced United Nations logistical support for the African Union Mission in Somalia to further weaken Al-Shabaab and bring more stability and hope to the Somali people than they have experienced in decades. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has responded to the Council's call for stronger measures to protect civilians by developing creative early-warning mechanisms to reduce the chances of attacks against civilians.

Strengthening peacekeeping remains a top priority for the United States at the United Nations. Our positions are well known. Mandates must be clear and achievable. Missions must have the resources required to carry out those mandates, including well-trained, equipped and skilled personnel, and there should be an exit plan that includes a political strategy — a vision of the desired end-state and effective early peacebuilding. Today's multidimensional peacekeeping missions must have the capabilities and resolve to use force effectively to deter threats, to defend themselves, to protect civilians and, in the case of Chapter VII mandates, to uphold the express will of the Security Council. The United Nations has many troop contributors that uphold the highest professional standards of proficiency and conduct, and we thank them for their service.

We must not allow a relatively few poor performers to undermine that reputation and put lives at risk. Therefore, the Secretariat must be firm about troop contingents, standards of readiness and performance. The Secretary-General should be ready to send home any contingents that do not act in accordance with the mission mandate or whose training and equipment maintenance standards are seriously deficient to the point of undermining the missions' operations.

Peacekeepers and all field mission staff must be held to the highest standard of conduct and discipline, particularly with regard to the sexual exploitation and abuse of vulnerable populations. We must not, and will not, tolerate any such abuse by peacekeeping personnel of the very populations they are charged with protecting.

For missions to succeed for the people they serve, capable and committed peacekeepers and commanders are necessary but not sufficient. Operational effectiveness requires strong support from Headquarters, as well as modern management, administrative and logistics practices and, of course, the contributions of the crucial civilian components. To that end, the United States strongly supports the rapid implementation of the global field support strategy. We remain concerned by gaps in aviation capacity and are determined to continue working with the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries to help close them. It is critical that the Secretariat holistically assess the best mix of aircraft, including military, civilian, fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft, to meet missions' needs. Helicopter-contributing countries should be fairly compensated for providing the United Nations with a scarce and high-value asset.

We welcome the efforts being made by the Secretariat, troop- and police-contributing countries and other partners to improve training and to set standards for professional skills. We hope the new scenario-based training models for the protection of civilians, now available to peacekeeping training centres and troop-contributing countries, the Secretariat's resources and capabilities matrix, and a United Nations capabilities standards manual for infantry battalions will improve performance in the field. We look forward to the feedback of force commanders and troop-contributing countries on those initiatives.

As the United Nations implements existing initiatives to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of peacekeeping missions, we must also continue to explore new areas of innovation in best practices and technology. The Council has placed a heavy responsibility on the shoulders of the generals present here. There are nearly 100,000 men and women in uniform from over 100 countries serving in United Nations missions, and doing so in some of the most dangerous and fragile places on Earth. We have asked the generals to bring, build and maintain peace and protect the vulnerable in the most difficult circumstances. It is very important to us that all their soldiers return home safely. Yet, as we know, that work is as honourable and essential as it is difficult. We are grateful for their service and bravery.

In that spirit, we appreciate the generals' candour and openness with us about their missions' needs, challenges and limitations so that the decisions that we make here in New York reflect the realities on the ground.

Mr. Zhukov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are pleased to welcome the Force Commanders back to this meeting of the Security Council, which has now become a regular event. Lest we forget, it was first held in August 2010 during the Russian presidency of the Security Council (S/PV.6370). It gives us a chance to better understand the current problems that peacekeepers face in implementing their Security Council mandates, as well as to get feedback first-hand and to ensure that the Council's military expertise remains relevant.

United Nations peacekeeping continues to be very much in demand. Peacekeepers play a leading role in supporting the efforts of national Governments towards stabilization, peacebuilding, providing protection to civilians and monitoring compliance with ceasefires. United Nations peacekeeping activities are constantly changing, both conceptually and operationally. It is important to adapt them to emerging problems and effectively react to new political realities and challenges. In that light, the United Nations in recent years has experienced an increasing demand for its resources and, as a result, has been called upon to tackle unprecedented tasks.

The events that peacekeepers have had to deal with confirm once again the vital nature of the core principles of peacekeeping. Peacekeepers must strictly abide by their mandates and not get dragged into internal political conflicts. They should not render tacit support to one of the parties to a conflict. That can lead

to extremely negative consequences and can call into question the reputation of the United Nations. Sadly, we have seen such unfortunate precedents in recent times.

Of course, peacekeeping mandates should be clear. They should not leave any latitude for malleable or subjective interpretation. They should be practically feasible and appropriate to the situation at hand. Peacekeepers can carry out only primary tasks in the field of peacebuilding. Inflating mandates to include unmandated peacebuilding functions is counterproductive.

An ongoing problem remains that of providing the necessary level of military expertise for measures taken within the framework of United Nations peacekeeping. There is a Charter mechanism that exists for that purpose; it is the Military Staff Committee. We believe it should step up its activities.

In order to improve United Nations peacekeeping, we should more effectively tap the resources of regional organizations, in strict compliance with Chapter VIII of the Charter. Useful improvements have been made in that sphere. Putting them into practice will allow us all to avoid repeating past mistakes in the future.

We hope that today's meeting is a good chance for all of us to reach a common understanding when it comes to further steps to enhance the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Mr. Alzate (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, for your initiative of organizing this meeting as an opportunity to continue our analysis of the state of peacekeeping operations. I would also like to thank Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his statement and for his efforts. I would also like to express my gratitude for the statements delivered by the Force Commanders. I also welcome the presence of the other generals who are joining us today. Their perspectives and experience on the ground contribute greatly to today's debate.

Colombia is encouraged by the progress made by the United Nations system towards attainable goals for the peaceful coexistence of peoples, through judicious cooperation of United Nations peacekeeping operations with regional organizations to build national and regional capacities and to develop strategies to increase peacekeeping operations' effectiveness in attaining sustainable results. In our view, it is crucial to build on work already done towards setting common goals and taking systematic steps towards them.

The Security Council, the General Assembly, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat must increase their cooperation in defining clear and realistic mandates, providing sufficient resources and planning in the long term. It is critical for the General Assembly and the Security Council to enhance dialogue and cooperation so that decisions taken will enjoy broad support and mandates will be in line with available resources.

The challenges faced by peacekeeping missions — and the expectations of them — are ever greater, and security conditions on the ground are ever more complex, even as resources are limited. Mandates should be devised with the political context and particularities of each specific situation in mind, and with a view to the available resources. We welcome initiatives to improve communication among the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries. We stress the importance of triangular cooperation, as a mechanism to promote cooperation and trust, in facing peacekeeping challenges. More meetings should be held with troop-contributing countries prior to renewing mandates in order to discuss substantive issues with practical implications for the conduct of missions.

It is important to increase the number of troop- and police-contributing countries, because developing nations currently provide the majority of uniformed peacekeepers. We reiterate the importance of building the capacities necessary to effectively carry out mandated tasks. We commend the progress made by the Secretariat in promoting capacities in order to improve effectiveness on the ground in matters of the intelligence, personnel in the field, capacity-building, human resources and equipment necessary to ensure smooth and timely deployments. The necessary measures should be taken to increase security for troops on the ground and to provide them with adequate equipment. We recognize and commend the progress made in monitoring and intelligence technology.

Stabilization and reconstruction require strategic plans to strengthen national capacities in affected or host countries, as well as social, political and sustainable development programmes. No strategy for lasting peace can overlook the important role that peacekeeping operations play in stabilizing host countries by supporting institutions and laying the groundwork

necessary for peacebuilding. The troops, police and civil personnel who make up peacekeeping operations do support work that is closely tied to peacebuilding. In that regard, a coordinated approach, with improved communication and dialogue with the Peacebuilding Commission, would be very helpful in identifying gaps in international assistance and support. The Commission should be invited to contribute its knowledge and experience to Security Council debates. It could also be instrumental in helping the United Nations broker ties with international financial institutions, which are critical to countries' revitalization.

Colombia continues to stand ready to contribute to peacekeeping operations to the extent it can and to take an active part in discussions about how to strengthen United Nations peacekeeping efforts.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous for having launched this important meeting and for his guidance of this discussion. I extend a warm welcome to the Force Commanders. The clarity of their perspectives works for an increased synergy between the Security Council and the situation on the ground. I commend them, especially in light of the great sacrifices they make in heading the various peacekeeping operations.

Guatemala attaches fundamental importance to United Nations peacekeeping operations, among other reasons because we are a country that has benefited directly from them. They fulfil a basic function of the United Nations and constitute an indispensable tool in the Organization's work, in which we take part as a troop-contributing country in South America, Africa and the Middle East. United Nations peacekeeping forces continue to evolve conceptually and operationally, as we have heard this morning. The increase in the number of peacekeeping operations in recent years has placed ever greater demands on United Nations resources, posing unprecedented challenges. Clearly, addressing them will require the attention and participation of all parties — the Security Council, Member States and the Secretariat.

We thank the Force Commanders in attendance today for sharing their important thoughts with us. Because we have troops and observers in all their missions, Guatemala has direct knowledge of the quality of their leadership and the depth of their commitment. We would like to make a few brief observations.

First, we reiterate the important need for peacekeeping operations to have clear, feasible and verifiable mandates that are adapted to each specific situation. Clearly, the primary responsibility for meeting those conditions falls to the Council.

Secondly, we are right to demand results from the heads of missions and from the troops in the field. However, we must also ensure that we provide them with the necessary tools to effectively carry out their tasks.

Thirdly, we must address the issue of the large gaps in capacity, resources and training, through better coordination among the Security Council, the General Assembly — through the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and the Fifth Committee — the Secretariat and the troop-contributing countries. In that respect, the comments of Lieutenant General Prakash of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are most useful.

Fourthly, we emphasize the importance of attaching the utmost priority to improving the security and protection of personnel deployed in the field, in particular when dealing with crisis situations or a complex political environment. For their part, host Governments must respect the basic principles of peacekeeping operations.

Fifthly, the four Force Commanders whom we heard from today discussed both the advantages and the challenges they face in dealing with multinational troops, in particular in attempting to integrate a diverse range of military strategies from various cultures into a cohesive and integrated force. Like others, we believe that troop-contributing countries themselves can contribute to that coherence by preparing their troops and officers before they are integrated into a peacekeeping mission. For its part, the Guatemalan Ministry of Defence has established a specialized training school to train troops and officers of the entire Central American region who are subsequently deployed in peacekeeping operations.

Sixthly, we greatly appreciated the comments made by Major General Fernando Rodrigues Goulart of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, which focused on the contribution made by the military component to ensure the stabilization of the host country and to support its institutions. In general terms, the military component is the largest component

of a mission and frequently serves as the face of the mission for the local population. Accordingly, it is important to provide the necessary training in areas such as cooperation between the military and civilians and sensitive areas concerning respect for culture, customs and traditions of the host country, as well as conduct and discipline in relation to gender matters and other related issues.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity provided by having all of the Force Commanders here in the Council today in order to ask how we in the Council can better integrate the opinions of the personnel serving in the field and the feedback provided by Force Commanders.

Mr. Vinay Kumar (India): At the outset, I would like to thank the Force Commanders of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti for their statements. I also thank Mr. Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for arranging to introduce them to us. We have carefully noted their views and think that their perspectives, which are based on experience gained on the ground while implementing the Council's resolutions, are important and will help the Council in its work.

As threats to international peace and security have changed over the decades, so have the challenges facing peacekeeping missions. Three of today's briefers head missions that were not deployed to keep peace between States, but within States. They must keep peace not between two conventional armies, but rather must deal with threats posed by armed groups in cases where it is not easy to distinguish a combatant from a civilian. They have to neutralize threats not to an easily identifiable boundary, but to State institutions and civilians.

Moreover, they are called upon not only to keep peace but to help to build national institutions and carry out functions normally within the purview of national Governments. For their operations to be effective, they must gain the confidence not only of host Governments but also of the communities in which they are deployed.

Under those circumstances, the rules of engagement and concepts of operations have to be adjusted to suit the particular circumstances of the host country. As it is said, one size cannot fit all situations. The need to maintain objectivity, neutrality, impartiality and fairness assumes even greater importance. With respect to the missions, standardization should aim at achieving optimum performance rather than acquiring the same equipment.

In that connection, it is important to keep in mind that several United Nations peacekeeping mandates have included tasks that raise questions on the fundamental tenet of consent. They can place peacekeepers in difficult legal circumstances, as the UNMISS Force Commander has mentioned, thereby sometimes hampering their effectiveness. The principle of national ownership must inform all of our tasks under the peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities of the United Nations.

Today's peacekeeping missions are tasked with mandates that have been compared to Christmas trees. Peacekeepers are asked to achieve what many of our States have struggled for decades, if not centuries, to achieve, while the gap in resources continues to be the singular reality constraining the reach and ambit of peacekeeping operations.

We must therefore keep in mind that providing human and material resources commensurate with the mandate is necessary not only for the operational effectiveness of peacekeeping missions, but also has a direct bearing on the credibility of the Council's mandates. Today, UNMISS Force Commanders gave a concrete example of the resource constraints during the Jonglei crisis in December 2011.

Peacekeeping missions of today form part of the overall composite efforts of the international community to pool the resources of its various institutions and organizations in order to mount the operations. As the Force Commanders have underscored, the vastness of their job requires the coherence of all efforts, and the success of the missions will depend not only on the peacekeepers' performance, but on the collaborative nature of the venture. Therefore, an assessment of the peacekeepers' performance cannot be isolated from the efficacy of the overall peace process.

Leadership at Headquarters and in the field and coherent objectives among various stakeholders will therefore determine the overall performance and achievement of the tasks mandated to peacekeeping missions. In that connection, we have noted the idea of composite force formations. Although it appears to be a logical option, the need for contingents to function as

coherent units must be borne in mind. Our policies in that regard must evolve gradually, with reality checks at each step.

Preserving and supervising peace agreements, restoring basic governance and establishing the skeleton for a national institutional framework are peacekeeping's chief accomplishments. The larger peace process must contribute to and capitalize on the stabilization achieved by the military components. Tasks ranging from establishing law and order and the rule of law to national institution-building cannot be entrusted to military components alone. Strategies must be devised with sufficient details, resources and implementation plans to address each phase of the peace process.

United Nations peacekeeping is truly a unique enterprise, involving global burden-sharing. The partnership between the Secretariat, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Security Council underpins that exercise. It derives its sustenance from our respective abilities to contribute positively to this venture. It requires a great deal of willingness to take account of and accommodate the views and concerns of all. The protection of civilians in order to assure them a life of dignity, security and opportunity is unquestionably a task that deserves much more than the international community has committed to thus far. Leaving it in the hands of peacekeepers alone is a half-measure at best. Our efforts in that regard must begin from where we have faltered rather than by attempting to create universal thematic constructs.

As the largest contributor of peacekeepers in United Nations history, India is conscious that much has changed since the first peacekeeping missions were launched more than five decades ago. The challenge before us is to build on the legacy of peacekeeping and ensure its relevance to current realities. We must remind ourselves that it is a small cost in the face of the noble goals we have set ourselves to achieve. Our capacity to effectively implement the mandates of United Nations missions will depend on providing adequate resources, generating rational mandates and sourcing expertise from countries that have the most relevant experience for the conditions in which peacekeepers are deployed. We must keep this in mind and act accordingly.

Before I conclude, I would like to pay homage to the peacekeepers, including those from my own country, who have laid down their lives while serving in United Nations missions.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): I would like to begin by thanking the President for giving us the opportunity today to hear thought-provoking presentations from the Force Commanders, whom we warmly welcome. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous for his participation and briefing.

Peacekeeping operations are a unique mechanism and an indispensable tool for our collective actions aimed at maintaining international peace and security. As it is gradually transformed into a more complex institution, peacekeeping is encountering a number of challenges that have a negative impact on its ability to effectively carry out its tasks. Matters related to increasing the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, and to their conceptual and operational evolution and adaptation to a constantly changing political and security environment, have been on our agenda for a long time and constitute an area that continues to require innovative ideas.

In that regard, I would like to underline the importance of interactions such as today's with the commanders of military components, which inform Council members of the challenges and problems that the Blue Helmets currently face in the field and lay out their vision for the parameters and indicators involved in the effective fulfilment of their mandates. In our view, such useful practices should become a frequent tradition.

For the sake of brevity, I would like to confine myself to sharing our perspectives on some aspects of peacekeeping. First, it is mandates that guide peacekeepers and give them a clear vision of their tasks. Mandates must be realistic, achievable and tailored to the logistical and operational capabilities with which peacekeepers are provided. At the same time, depending on security developments on the ground, mandates could envisage a certain amount of flexibility aimed at achieving broader inter-mission cooperation and rapid operational adjustments.

Secondly, the importance of continued trilateral cooperation among the Council, the Secretariat and the troop- and police-contribution countries has been stressed. Indeed, it is vital for effective United Nations peacekeeping, as is peacekeepers' cooperation with host countries. Needless to say, coordinating action and cooperating closely with host countries, especially

on the military side, is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of mandates.

Thirdly, apart from the political and security conditions on the ground, cultural and religious nuances in host societies have an impact on peacekeeping's success. The parties to a conflict and the public should have trust in peacekeepers' efforts. In that regard, I would like to emphasize the importance of a correct public perception of the roles and responsibilities of peacekeepers and of the strengthening of the relationship between military peacekeepers and the local population. To that end, military mandates should prioritize the protection of civilians from the start.

Fourthly, United Nations peacekeeping is dependent not only on the willingness of Member States to contribute but also on their ability to do so. When it comes to equipment and funding distribution by Member States for military, police and civilian forces, the current situation is obviously not flawless. Special emphasis could be placed on developing the military and police peacekeeping capacities of individual Member States, not only by the United Nations, but also through bilateral assistance programmes between Member States. However, such assistance should not be predicated on States' subsequent involvement in particular operations, which is undoubtedly a matter to be decided at the national level. At the same time, the United Nations can be instrumental in encouraging and supporting the development of the peacekeeping capacities of relevant mandated regional organizations.

Finally, in discussing United Nations peacekeeping, we cannot pass over in silence the recent attacks on peacekeepers that occurred in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Côte d'Ivoire. An attack on the Blue Helmets is an attack on the United Nations, and thus constitutes a grave violation of international law. We pay tribute to all our peacekeepers for the enormous sacrifices they make for the noble goal of peace and security throughout the world. The safety and security of all of them must be respected, guaranteed and ensured by all and in all circumstances.

Mr. Menan (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I too would like to thank and commend the Force Commanders from the various peacekeeping missions who are here, not only for their very useful briefings but also for the work they are doing on the ground, often in difficult circumstances.

The issue of peacekeeping operations is very important both to Security Council members and to the countries hosting missions. Such operations have evolved since the first was launched in 1948, in terms of both their composition and their mandates. The nature and proliferation of conflicts have required peacekeeping operations to adapt in order to become more operational and efficient.

The briefings we have just heard basically confirm the genuine necessity of adapting missions to the context on the ground and of enabling peacekeeping to evolve into peacebuilding, using troops with proven skills. Togo welcomes the fact that for a number of years now analyses have been made of peacekeeping missions' operationalization and their actual contribution to the development of countries where they are deployed. In view of the complex nature of such missions today, due to the multiplicity of stakeholders and the nature of conflicts, peacekeeping operations must seek to combine effectiveness, independence and success.

Togo shares the views expressed by the briefers and by a number of speakers before me on the agenda item for this meeting. However, we would like to reiterate that peacekeeping operations must have adequate and predictable resources in order for missions to be undertaken. As a contributing country, we are aware of the difficulties that can arise as a result of delayed reimbursements to troop- and equipment-contributing countries. We therefore urge donor countries to continue to support peacekeeping missions so that financing issues do not hamper their smooth functioning.

Standardizing the training of peacekeeping personnel also remains of great importance to troop-contributing countries. Providing such standardized training should enable all personnel to have the same level of training and to avoid different practices in the field. Similarly, a clearly defined mandate is needed in order to prevent any difference in interpretation, as is sometimes the case when peacekeepers are accused of not responding in the face of acts of violence against civilians. We believe that a clear mandate should make it possible to identify stakeholders' level of responsibility.

Moreover, we welcome inter-mission cooperation, as is currently the case between the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the United Nations Mission in Liberia. We encourage such cooperation, which can contribute to effectively combating cross-border armed groups in particular.

Effective and successful peacekeeping operations require ongoing constructive cooperation between missions and host Governments. Such participation should therefore be a significant element of the mandate of missions, whose success is their raison d'être. We welcome initiatives undertaken in that regard, particularly in areas such as police training and national capacity-building, especially in the fields of justice, human rights, in particular the protection of women and children, and the establishment of the rule of law.

In conclusion, once again on behalf of the Togolese Government, I wish to commend the commitment of peacekeepers and civilians who work selflessly and tirelessly in order to promote international peace and security, in particular in Africa.

Mr. Laher (South Africa): We wish to join others in thanking Under-Secretary-General Ladsous, as well as the Force Commanders present with us today, for their respective briefings. The themes that were identified for today's meeting clearly reflect the diverse challenges that confront modern United Nations peacekeeping operations.

We always speak of United Nations peacekeeping as the flagship activity of the United Nations — and rightfully so. We therefore find it very appropriate for the Council to set aside time each year for an exchange of views with the heads of the military components of United Nations-mandated peacekeeping missions. We know that peacekeepers are often the first United Nations presence on the ground to bolster post-conflict situations, in most cases following delicate and fragile peace agreements. Therefore, the expectations of the military in such cases are, indeed, high.

While recognizing that, we must remain cognizant that peacekeeping is only a supportive mechanism, not an alternative to political strategies adopted by the Council to address post-conflict situations. Therefore, while peacekeeping missions, of which the military aspect is but one component, are being made to take on complex and multidimensional tasks, there remains a tendency to associate most tasks of the peacekeeping mission with the military component. We must be mindful of such pitfalls and ensure that multidimensional peacekeeping operations live up to what they are designed for, that is, an integrated, cohesive and coordinated unit that is able to meet the common objective mandated for it by the Council.

We therefore welcome this opportunity for the Council to hear directly from the leadership in the field, and would urge that such a practice, now being held for the third consecutive year, become an institutionalized and annual practice of the Council.

From the briefings that we have received, we recognize the imperative for us in the Council, together with the United Nations political and military leadership on the ground, to be continuously seized with mobilizing and maintaining the political support of all stakeholders in a post-conflict situation. While peacekeepers must preserve the window of stability that has been secured through a peace agreement, we note the additional challenges that they must endure in balancing operational effectiveness with political and developmental coherence. Needless to say, we must safeguard the military component from being overstretched and burdened with tasks that are not normally within their military ambit.

The Council also has a particularly important role, throughout a mission's life, to support efforts to improve cooperation and coordination with regional and subregional organizations and other partners. The African Union and the United Nations have been working closely together in Darfur and Somalia, which is a clear manifestation of innovative and smart partnerships. As the Secretary-General put it earlier this year at the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, such partnerships help give United Nations peacekeeping the flexibility that it needs to address today's wide-ranging challenges to international peace and security.

We should also not miss this opportunity to reflect on issues that are pertinent to, and impact upon, troops on the ground. Among others, such issues include our ability to optimally leverage the security umbrella provided by peacekeeping operations in the field in order to find political solutions to conflicts. The Council must adopt coherent and comprehensive strategies that effectively translate peacekeeping operation mandates into clear, credible and achievable outcomes.

In addition, it is necessary to ensure that operations are sufficiently matched with appropriate resources, and that the United Nations is adequately prepared and capable of timely deployment at the desired operational strength and capacity. It is also necessary to ensure adequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for peacekeeping operations, and that the Council is

sufficiently aware of the resource and field support implications of its decisions.

Many of those issues were highlighted in the briefings that we received today from the Force Commanders. The high expectations that come with United Nations peacekeeping deployments were sufficiently stressed, as was the need for greater standardization. Also highlighted was the need for sufficient resources and a good and cooperative working relationship with the host Government. We listened, with great interest, to how peacekeepers could play a practical role as peacebuilders, as illustrated in the case of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example.

The importance of early-warning systems and cooperation with host Government security forces was further highlighted in the case of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan. Lastly, the need for United Nations missions to invest in building national security in order to avoid a security vacuum upon their withdrawal was also amplified as an important contribution to the protection of civilians.

It is important that, in its future deliberations, the Council consider those and other challenges highlighted by the Force Commanders today. More important, we must consider most carefully the recommendations that emanate from their briefings.

In conclusion, we recognize that United Nations peacekeepers are often sent to some of the world's most dangerous and unstable environments. As a consequence, those brave men and women come face to face with life-threatening situations and put their lives at risk so that others may be saved. We therefore pay tribute to those fallen peacekeepers.

Mr. Berger (Germany): At the outset, I would like to thank the Force Commanders for their thorough briefings. I strongly welcome their presence here today. Such annual consultations are always an excellent opportunity for greater insight. The face-to-face exchange with those on the ground is highly important to our work here in New York. I would like to express my gratitude to them for their work, and through them I would like to thank all those serving, often under very difficult circumstances, in peacekeeping operations.

In recent years, much has been achieved in terms of reforming United Nations peacekeeping, including shaping doctrine and reviewing capabilities. Building on those efforts, we need to continue to adapt and strengthen peacekeeping in order to make it more effective. Missions, as has been said here before by colleagues, must have the resources needed to do their jobs, but in times of financial constraints it will be necessary to make full use of the potential for higher efficiency and increased performance.

In the area of mandates and mandate reviews, we should focus our attention on formulating clear, realistic and achievable mandates, on reviewing and adapting those mandates in the light of changing circumstances on the ground, and on preparing transitions and crafting exit strategies. In terms of mandate implementation and mission management, we need to continue to work towards faster mission deployment and build-up, and towards streamlining all aspects of field support. Continuous dialogue among all relevant stakeholders is crucial in that regard.

I would like to take the opportunity to interact directly with the Force Commanders present and ask them the following questions.

The Security Council has stressed the need for inter-mission cooperation in various cases. In that context, the cooperation between the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire has been mentioned here. I would like to ask the Force Commanders to communicate their views with regard to sharing scarce assets. Which practical problems have arisen? Which approaches proved successful? What lessons can be learned? Would they have any proposals to share with the Security Council?

With regard to the use of modern technology, situational awareness is crucial in theatre. A better operational picture might assist in more safely coping with the challenges faced by a mission. How do the Force Commanders assess the use of modern technology? I believe it was Major General Obi who mentioned the case of Jonglei. In our view, that would be a good example of a place where modern technology could have been of great help.

With regard to common operational military standards, contemporary peacekeeping operations are more and more complex and multidimensional. Common operational military standards could facilitate the process of expanding the base of troop- and police-contributing countries and at the same time enhance the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.

What is the Force Commanders' experience? What are the areas in which those standards are most needed?

Finally, with regard to coordination within a mission, coordination is one of the challenges of a composite force. Common standards, training and the interoperability of equipment are prerequisites for effective coordination. In that regard, I understood Lieutenant General Prakash's suggestions when he commented on his experience. The question, apart from what he said, is whether there are other experiences in that regard that the Force Commanders could share with the Council. Would they have any recommendations to make in that area?

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for your initiative to convene today's important debate on peacekeeping, a pillar of the work of the United Nations. I also thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and the Force Commanders for giving us a direct insight into their work on the ground.

In recent years, peacekeeping operations have changed greatly. Their deployment level is unprecedented, and mandates are broad. Sixteen operations are currently under way; some, such as the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, are multidimensional.

I would like first to reiterate the deep and long-standing commitment of France to enhancing United Nations peacekeeping capacities. My country participates in nine of the 16 peacekeeping operations and contributes to peacekeeping operations under United Nations auspices through the European Union, NATO or in its national capacity. France is present in numerous foreign theatres, including Somalia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Côte d'Ivoire. It actively supports the participation of African States in peacekeeping operations through the African Capacity-Building for Peace Operations programme. It has created national schools with a regional outlook in order to provide technical and operational know-how adapted to the needs of African armies.

Since the Franco-British initiative of 2009 on operational follow-up, we have continued to advocate for enhanced military expertise, improved cooperation of the Council with troop- and police-contributing countries, and better budgeting for peacekeeping operations. While many recommendations from the Brahimi report (S/2000/809), published over 10 years ago, remain valid, I should like to highlight three vital elements: inter-mission cooperation, the protection of civilians and establishing strategies for transitioning between peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

First, inter-mission cooperation allows the optimization of the use of resources devoted to peacekeeping operations by facilitating the sharing of resources, equipment or units belonging to neighbouring missions. When unforeseen events threaten the stability of a country, inter-mission cooperation between missions is an adaptive, effective response that can swiftly strengthen missions in need in terms of manpower and equipment. That cooperation has proven its worth in West Africa, where cooperation between the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the United Nations Mission in Liberia was vital in pooling the use of helicopters in the context of the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. It has also been useful in East Africa, where helicopters from the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were temporarily deployed to South Sudan.

Inter-mission cooperation allows economies of scale to be achieved in response to the need for good management and budgetary constraints, which are more present than ever. It must be encouraged and even rendered systematic both to pool capacities — particularly of scarce air assets, such as helicopters, and of logistical support structures, which allows substantial rationalization of mission support — and to share situation analysis and assessment, particularly when missions find themselves on either side of a border. In those three areas, there is still much room for improvement. Cooperation must be facilitated while respecting mandates assigned by the Security Council to each mission and ensuring good coordination with the troop-contributing countries.

Secondly, civilian protection must remain one of the main goals of peacekeeping operation mandates. Peacekeepers must be trained to that end and conduct themselves impeccably on the ground. Moreover, it is vital for the chain of command of operations to be respected. Peacekeepers must establish a safe environment conducive to the resumption of political process, which requires the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, including for children affected by conflict,

security sector reform programmes, and programmes that strengthen the rule of law.

As my colleague from the United States said, women are one of the main levers for reforming a society. It is vital to enhance their participation in decision-making. The integration of women into the police force and the army helps us to better combat sexual and sexist violence and to promote human rights within those institutions. Advisers for the protection of women and children must play an increasingly significant role in missions.

Thirdly, we need to create crisis exit strategies that guarantee a lasting return to peace. We need to draw operational conclusions from the absence of division between peacekeeping and peacebuilding so that each stage of a United Nations mission can better prepare for the following stage in order to better anticipate and foresee exit strategies. In that respect, it is crucial for peacekeeping operations to cooperate closely with United Nations country team agencies so that peacekeeping and peacebuilding functions are properly distributed and duplication is avoided. We look to the Peacebuilding Commission to provide better coherence to the action of the international community in post-conflict phases. There is a need also to take into account as soon as possible cross-cutting threats such as the traffic in drugs and human beings, organized crime and corruption, which have strong destabilizing potential in fragile countries.

Allow me here to touch on the issue of multilingualism, as raised by my Moroccan colleague. When I refer to multilingualism, I am not talking about the status of languages in the United Nations but to the basic need for United Nations missions to be able to communicate with the peoples of the countries where they are deployed. I believe that the Secretariat's efforts in that respect are greatly lacking. The French-speaking capacity of many missions in francophone countries is very limited, owing in particular to recruitment modalities.

During the three years that I have been in the Organization, I have been trying to make the point that it is more important for staff to be able to speak French in a francophone country than to be able to write a report in English for transmittal to New York. Too often we recruit staff on the basis of their ability to write a report for New York, while completely ignoring the issue of whether they will be able to converse in French in a francophone country. I could give you many such examples, including for staff who are at a very average level. I think that this leads to inefficiency. Once again, I am not speaking of the status of French within the Organization, but of the effectiveness of our resources. Every time I have visited missions in francophone countries, I have found that most mission staff, especially at a higher level, did not speak French. I find this deeply regrettable, and I wish to stress once again to the Secretariat the need to put an end to this practice and for recruitment boards on the ground to give priority to French over English, especially in French-speaking areas.

I know that what I said was a waste of breath and that the Secretariat will do nothing, but sometimes it is good to say what we think.

We would like to reiterate that the success of a peacekeeping mission is the result of joint efforts by the States members of the Council, the countries that contribute financially, the TCCs and PCCs, and the Secretariat. However, such efforts will be futile in the absence of a strong commitment on the part of the host country. Here I wish to stress the need for cooperation with the host country, which needs to work both ways: we must, of course, cooperate with the host country, but that country must also respond to our appeals and offer its own perspective on the problem.

I will conclude by paying high tribute to the commitment of peacekeepers of all nationalities — which sometimes costs them their lives, as in the case of the seven Nigerian Blue Helmets — to the cause of peace.

Mr. Tatham (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes this opportunity to have a productive dialogue with Force Commanders, and I thank you, Mr. President, for sustaining this valuable initiative for the third year in succession. I thank also the Force Commanders for having provided us with very important and insightful perspectives from the field.

The Security Council should focus on delivering mandates that empower peacekeepers to do their jobs, primarily in support of the restoration of peace and the protection of civilians. We recognize and deeply appreciate the valuable role of peacekeepers and the risks that they are exposed to, as evidenced by the recent tragic deaths in Côte d'Ivoire. We pay the sincerest tribute to peacekeepers and their work, to their bravery and their commitment.

I would like to echo a point made by several colleagues. As a Council we need to be acutely aware of our responsibility to give missions clear, focused and realistic mandates. We need to keep a careful eye on any temptation to bridge Council differences through blurred or unclear mandate language. The constructive ambiguity of a drafting fix in the Council can sometimes solve problems in New York but create them in the field.

I am speaking near to the end of this debate, and I am conscious that there have been many questions. I do not want to pile on many more, but there are a few points on which I would welcome the views of the Force Commanders.

There can always be improvement in the Council's access to military advice, particularly the insight provided by Force Commanders today and in meetings with troop-contributing countries in advance of mandate renewals, to help strengthen the Security Council's deliberations. We need to consider if more can be done to improve the Council's understanding of the operational demands placed on troops and police by the peacekeeping resolutions that we draft. I would therefore welcome views from Force Commanders on what steps could be taken to better incorporate military advice into mission planning and ensure that such information is fed to the Council in a sustained rather than episodic manner.

In order to be effective in complex peacekeeping environments, United Nations missions must have the capacity and will to deter those who would derail the peace process or threaten civilians and United Nations peacekeepers. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations has previously expressed its support for peacekeepers to demonstrate a deterrent posture in defence of themselves and their mandates. The Secretary-General has often set out the benefits of a robust approach in his reporting to the Council on particular missions. We have seen how effectively this has worked in, for example, Abyei. We have also heard this morning from General Obi about the valuable proactive and upstream work carried out by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan during very difficult circumstances in Jonglei several months ago. I was struck by how this latter example highlighted the importance of robust early-warning systems.

I would be interested to hear to what degree Force Commanders see the need to adopt a robust approach in their missions, and to what level they feel empowered to take this kind of approach. Do they, for example, see national caveats constraining the response by certain contingents?

Better inter-mission cooperation is key to improvements in peacekeeping and, as some colleagues have pointed out, to the greater efficiency that helps reconcile the pressures for peacekeeping resources on the one hand and budgetary rigour on the other. The Council was able to see first-hand the benefits of this during its recent visit to West Africa. That cooperation related to the temporary sharing of resources and some intelligence-sharing between the political teams of the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire. What we did not see so clearly was local-level cooperation between those peacekeeping missions' military components and national security forces designed to prevent incursions across borders and share intelligence. I would therefore like to ask Force Commanders if there is more that missions can do to track the movement of armed groups over borders and improve local capacity to monitor and act on such movements, working coherently with all local actors.

We have heard from Force Commanders about the challenge of the protection of civilians and the fact that in order to fulfil their mandate to protect civilians, forces need more agility and more mobility, but at the same time face a shortage of air assets and problems over freedom of movement. I agree with those Council members who have emphasized the importance of mobility and flexibility.

In that context, I was interested by the point made by General Prakash, who made the case for basing contributions on the standard battalion of infantry. I would like to ask Force Commanders how they see the balance between flexibility and mobility on the one hand and the need for consistency and standardization on the other.

One final point: with the push for integrated missions and an increasing focus on peacebuilding, it is important that we do not neglect the centrality and mandates of both protection of civilians and maintaining and supporting security. Security, after all, provides the foundation for successful peacebuilding. It is important, too, not to lose sight of the fact that the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians lies with the host States and that Force Commanders

engage closely with hosts in order to build national capacity.

I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for this valuable and timely briefing. I look forward to the forthcoming interactive discussion.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

I should like to thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous and the four Force Commanders for their briefings. The four Force Commanders of United Nations peacekeeping operations make important contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security by implementing the mandates given by the Security Council. I wish to pay tribute to all the Force Commanders and chief military observers, and, through them, to all United Nations peacekeepers around the world.

As the international situation undergoes complex changes, United Nations peacekeeping operations also face many challenges. To respond to those challenges, we need to better coordinate, better make use of the resources available and better manage peacekeeping operations around the globe. In that regard, I appreciate the efforts made and the progress achieved by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations under the leadership of Under-Secretary-General Ladsous.

Having heard this morning's briefings, I shall focus on three points in my statement. First, peacekeeping operations should always adhere to the principle of objectivity and neutrality. Host countries and regions in which there are peacekeeping operations often find themselves in a complicated political environment. Peacekeeping operations should abide strictly with the mandates of the Security Council, respect the will and choice of the people of host countries and become promoters and mediators in the political process and national reconciliation of host countries. While carrying out their mandate, peacekeeping operations should pay great attention to the views of the parties concerned in the host countries, respect the local culture and have the trust and support of the people of the host countries.

Secondly, mandate planning for integrated missions should be strengthened. Peacekeeping operation mandates have become increasingly complex and multidimensional. In the course of carrying out their mandates, peacekeeping operations should have clear priorities. The relationship between long-term and short-term objectives should be addressed properly. When formulating mandates for peacekeeping operations, the Security Council should take into full consideration the particular situation of host countries and take a pragmatic approach. Once mandates are given, the necessary resources and instruments should be guaranteed.

Thirdly, different components of peacekeeping operations should strengthen their coordination to generate synergy to foster the achievement of stability and strengthen institution-building in host countries. Military and civilian components of peacekeeping operations should have a clear division of labour and utilize their respective advantages with a view to achieving a seamless transition between peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

Council members have raised some questions in their statements. I shall now give the floor to Under-Secretary-General Ladsous, Major General Obi and Lieutenant General to respond to the questions raised.

I now give the floor to Major General Obi to respond to the questions raised by the Council members.

Major General Obi: I will first attempt to address the issue of inter-mission cooperation. I will also touch on the issue of the use of technology in early-warning situations and perhaps also comment on robustness. With regard to the issue of inter-mission cooperation, I would like to give examples of how we are going about it and also highlight some problems that I have been asked to cover.

With regard to the issue of inter-mission cooperation, I want to start with the Jonglei crisis. In that regard, I must thank the Under-Secretary-General and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), which came to our rescue through their support with military helicopters, which we did not have. Those helicopters were available and we used them for the movement of dangerous cargo. That was a very clear example of inter-mission cooperation.

I also want to say, with regard to the other areas in which we cooperated, that we wished we could

have done even more. In that regard, let me cite an unfortunate incident involving the troops of United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei who went into a mine and lost persons. That was a very clear-cut case where helicopters from the south were placed on standby to move in to transport out the casualties. Of course, we were in communication to share information. There was also the possibility of helicopters coming from the north to also move the casualties. In that regard, I also want to say that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General was very involved in her communication with Khartoum to see how we could move in to facilitate that process. But I also want to say that there was a challenge of access to helicopters from the south. That is where I think the Council would be very helpful to us. When lives are involved, I think it is important that helicopters move in from whichever direction possible to save lives.

With regard to the issue of border verification, let me give an instance where we had to cooperate with the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) to cover the area bordering South Darfur and Northern Bahr Al-Ghazal. There we were able to work together on verifying bombings and, at times, on troop cooperation. We also went as far as to the disputed areas to verify incidents of bombings, and we were able to report effectively to DPKO and, subsequently, to the Council.

I also want to say that there will be a lot of need for cooperation between the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and UNAMID in the area of border monitoring. The Sudan and South Sudan share a border that is very extensive — about 2,200 kilometres — and we also know that we must share access with UNAMID, which we have been doing in terms of logistics. As UNAMID deploys, UNMISS is already cooperating and stands by to cooperate even more in the areas of logistic support and information-sharing.

We have also benefitted from Mi-26 helicopters deployed on 6 June from UNAMID for our deployment in South Sudan. We think that has been very helpful. All of that has been possible through the system of the global field support strategy, which allows support elements to move across missions.

We also have the issue of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), where we are mandated to protect civilians as it relates to the LRA. UNMISS works very closely with the missions — UNAMID and MONUSCO — we also share information with the United Nations mission in Khartoum and recently we have had to have meetings together. We have had conferences, including in Entebbe, and we are engaging right now. I have been to the African Union Regional Task Force, with which we have established a liaison. Together with the LRA-affected countries, the Uganda People's Defence Force and other stakeholders, we are sharing information and are able to focus on the issue of the LRA as it affects civilian protection in South Sudan. That has been helpful to us in UNMISS.

With regard to the issue of technology, I also want to say I think that would have been very useful to us in Jonglei, which is a large expanse of land without access. It is waterlogged and people moving on foot to attack other communities can hide under shrubs and so on. The helicopters available to us, especially the civilian helicopters, are cumbersome for one to observe through the windows to be able to locate people. They are limited in range, visibility and the ability to carry out operations at night and in different types of weather. Therefore, there are a lot of challenges. Those also have to do with monitoring instruments not being available. In that regard, therefore, we think that the use of technology will assist us in identifying the movement of persons who may want to attack others, cattle rustlers and the rest of them. In that regard, I also want to say, as I have long said, that in order to effectively monitor the border between the Sudan and South Sudan with a mission that does not have much manpower and a limited range of helicopter movement, the mission will need everything it can get in terms of technology to be able to support its ability to monitor cross-border movements between the two countries. I think that will be very important.

As to robustness, I think that we demonstrated in Jonglei that even when we were not fully staffed we held out, and our troops had very clear instructions to protect. That is exactly what we did in the case of Jonglei. I therefore wish to say that we are committed to being robust and, of course, we appreciate all the

support we have been getting. We hope that our demands will receive the support that we are asking for in terms of helicopters and riverine capability. Of course, manpower is always limited and the area of coverage is very wide.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I give the floor to Lieutenant General Prakash.

Lieutenant General Prakash: I shall first answer the question posed by the representative of Guatemala about what can be done with the feedback provided by the Force Commanders.

I think that the Council can do a lot. There are a number of players who have a role to play in the feedback that is provided by the Force Commanders. Because there are a number of players to act on the feedback that is provided, the chain is long. In the military component, the frequency with which it changes is very high; it is somewhere between six and 12 months. Thus, unless that time gap is cut down, the feedback provided by the Force Commander is of no use. My request for the support that the Council can give is to reduce that time gap, which will help the Force Commander.

As to the question that was raised regarding the flexibility or rigidity of standards, when one has real standards there is definitely a tendency for rigidity to creep in. But my request is that it not be considered in that light. It should be considered from the viewpoint that standards provide us with capability, and that flexibility is the state of mind with which these standards should be used to one's own advantage. If there are no national caveats, there is an inbuilt flexibility in the memorandum of understandings. The standards that are laid down by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations can only help us to perform better.

There was another question about the issues to which common military standards can apply. In fact, there is a wide range of facets to be addressed in that regard. First and foremost, I would say, are force protection measures. Various contingents come with varied types of equipment and varied perceptions concerning force protection. That is one issue that can be addressed. Even with a small tactical activity like patrolling, different nations have different ways and means of undertaking it; even that is an area that could be addressed.

Some or most military contingents, having been trained to fight wars and not to keep peace, do not understand the implications of joint assessment teams and joint protection teams, or what kind of role the military has to play in them. That is another area where standardization can be undertaken. Another area is the gathering of analyses of information. That, I feel, is a major facet where the standardization of military contingents can be brought in.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous: In view of the time, Mr. President, I will be brief.

On international cooperation, I want to mention a very recent example. I was in Abidjan a week ago for the ceremony to commemorate the seven soldiers killed in the western part of Côte d'Ivoire. Precisely on that occasion, a very important quadripartite meeting took place. It included the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia and both United Nations Missions. Together, in the course of a single day, they reached a number of agreements on very specific activities — for instance, on not just joint patrolling but also parallel patrolling on both sides of the border, completely coordinated on both sides of the river that demarcates the border. That is just one example of a very solid programme of joint work. I understand that it will now be possible for the tactical helicopters to be used on both sides of the border without differentiation. I thank that that should provide our two Commanders with a very effective tool to step up, by one or several notches, the fight against the spoilers who were responsible for that lamentable attack.

On the question of the standards, I would like to recall that we have thus far devised a policy of standards in three categories, namely, for infantry battalions, staff officers and medical units. In the case of infantry battalions we have gone one step further. It just happens that, two days ago, we finalized internally the manual for infantry battalions, which will actually strengthen the standards. When we talk of standards we are talking, of course, about flexibility. But standards also have the advantage of setting the level of expectation in terms of preparation, training and professional behaviour. I think this is all part of the policy that we are trying to develop of enhancing the quality of the troops that we take on board and use.

The issue of caveats was mentioned. Of course, Mr. President, you will realize that caveats are totally unacceptable. It is a matter of faith and trust in the Secretary-General and our force commanders. I know

that it happens, but that does not mean that we accept it. As we go for more quality and as our splendid generals do their jobs, I think we must no longer accept this as a fact of life.

Finally, I notice that the Ambassador of France has left. But to his colleagues I would say that multilingualism is indeed a concern. I was very surprised to see what I saw in Haiti, for instance. While I would not have expected anybody to speak Creole, I would have expected that the vast majority could speak French. But no, only about 30 per cent of the Mission's staff speaks French. I find that very strange. Let me say that, to my mind at least, the fact that one can write a report in Chinese or in American is not a problem. The fact is that in francophone countries people should be able to speak French. That takes time. There are also sometimes difficulties in getting candidates. But I think this is simply common sense. I do take that on board.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous for his additional clarifications and the information he has provided.

Today's meeting has been a fruitful one. We had a useful discussion with the Force Commanders and the chief military observers on the state and experience and improvement of peacekeeping operations. This is of positive significance for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of peacekeeping operations.

Peacekeeping operations are among the most important means at the disposal of the United Nations for carrying out its responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security. Blue Helmets have become the symbol of the United Nations. Moreover, for people in conflict areas, Blue Helmets signify security and hope. Peacekeepers work in harsh, complicated and dangerous conditions. They have overcome enormous difficulties to carry out the mandates of the Security Council and to provide peace and a future for peoples in conflict zones. Their achievements are extraordinary and they are the embodiment of the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations.

Before I conclude, allow me once again, on behalf of the Security Council, to express our heartfelt gratitude to all the Force Commanders, the senior military observers present and all peacekeepers around the world. I pay the highest tribute to them for their courage, perseverance and dedication. I wish them all the best.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.